



Weekly Review

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GUYANA: AFTER THE ELECTION

Opposition parties have announced that they will boycott the newly elected National Assembly in which Prime Minister Burnham's People's National Congress holds 37 of 53 seats. Burnham has moved swiftly to head off any attempt to oppose his administration by violence.

Burnham's overwhelming victory will not ease long-standing racial tensions between blacks and East Indians, but the wide margin of victory for his black-oriented People's National Congress may persuade many East Indians that opposition is futile. Even young hotheads in Cheddi Jagan's People's Progressive Party, which is dominated by East Indians, recognize that Burnham would meet force with force. The fact that Burnham now enjoys a better than two-thirds majority in parliament and has personally assumed all responsibility for security matters makes it unlikely that the opposition will be able to cause serious disruptions or have the election invalidated by the courts.

Few Guyanese are likely to believe government assertions that the election was completely honest. Opposition spokesmen fear that Burnham's victory signals the establishment of a one-party system.

Burnham is expected to pursue the socialist and nationalist policies he has followed since 1968. The Prime Minister has already named Guyana's first ambassador to the People's Republic of China, and Burnham is scheduled to arrive in Canada on 1 August for the meeting of Commonwealth heads of government. He is expected to attend the nonaligned conference in Algeria in September. At home and abroad, Burnham is not likely to let people forget that his party won a landslide victory in 1973.